

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 122211Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7010
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEBR, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: DIVISIONS IN FEDERAL SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY

1. FEDERAL SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY (SOCREDS) HAS BEEN FRAGMENTED SINCE DEATH OF ITS STRONG LEADER AND ELDER STATESMAN REAL CAQUETTE, IN 1976. FEDERAL SOCREDS, IN ANY CASE, MEAN QUEBEC SOCREDS SINCE SOCRED CAUCUS IN THE HOUSE IS ENTIRELY FROM QUEBEC AND THERE IS NO PROSPECT OF AN ANGLOPHONE GAINING A SEAT IN COMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

2. SOCRED NATIONAL POLICY CONVENTION IN WINNIPEG MAR 17-19 ONLY SERVED TO HIGHLIGHT FACT THAT NATIONAL PARTY, ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE, IS FORM RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE. MEETING RESULTED IN HARD FEELINGS BETWEEN FRANCOPHONES AND VARIETY OF WESTERN ANGLOPHONE MEMBERS. ACTING PARTY LEADER GILLES CAQUETTE TOLD EMBOFF SEVERAL DAYS AFTER MEETING THAT QUEBEC FACTION DID NOT RECEIVE ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION AND WAS LIKELY TO GO ITS OWN WAY.

3. SOCRED CAUCUS MEETING APRIL 11 RESULTED IN FURTHER SPLINTERING OF THE PARTY. MAVERICK MP RENE MATTE, WHO HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEEN ANATHEMA TO OTHER CAUCUS MEMBERS, RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY (PROBABLY BEFORE BEING ASKED TO LEAVE) AND ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO SIT AS AN INDEPENDENT. FURTHER, INTERIM LEADER GILLES CAQUETTE RESIGNED HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION ALSO LIKELY BEFORE BEING ASKED TO STEP DOWN. CAQUETTE WAS SUCCEEDED BY C. A. GAUTHIER AS INTERIM LEADER PENDING OUTCOME OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN

WINNIPEG MAY 6. CANDIDATES, ALL ANGLOPHONES, FOR LEADERSHIP ARE: MARTIN HATTERSELY, AN EDMONTON LAWYER; PHIL GAGLARDI, FORMER BC CABINET MINISTER UNDER W.A.C. BENNETT; LORNE REZNOWSKI, MANITOBA PROFESSOR.

4. COMMENT: BIZARRE MACHINATIONS OF THIS BIZARRE PARTY WOULD BE MORE AMUSING THAN SIGNIFICANT BUT FOR POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS IN COMING NATIONAL ELECTIONS. MATTE HAS ANNOUNCED HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PCS) AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT PCS HAVE BEEN COURTING GILLES CAOUETTE AS WELL AS OTHER SOCRED MEMBERS. WE DOUBT THAT TORIES WILL WANT MATTE BOTH BECAUSE OF HIS ERRATIC POLICY BACKGROUND, INCLUDING HIS SUPPORT FOR "SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION" CONCEPT, AND BECAUSE HE MAY NOT BE RE-ELECTED. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, INTERESTED IN CAOUETTE AND OTHER SOCRED MEMBERS. THERE IS INDICATION THAT LIBERALS HAVE ALSO BEEN MAKING OVERTURES TO SOME SOCRED MPS. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT MOST OF 8 REMAINING SOCREDS WILL RUN AS SOCREDS AND MAJORITY WILL BE RE-ELECTED. IN MINORITY GOVERNMENT SITUATION, THIS FACTION COULD BE IMPORTANT FAR BEYOND ITS NUMBERS. ENDERS

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